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Spring sounds
Taking a moment to enjoy Nature's Song on page 4

Little joys
Maybelle sees magic on page 5

Stories from the past
History paving the way on page 12

Sleeping Beauty
The sculptures within the Haliburton Sculpture Forest are slowly waking up, after their long winter nap. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

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JUDE: *Colours*

I'M JULIAN. Some friends say *Hey Jude!* since many of them know about the *Beatles*. Mum and I sing oldies in her van. Hey Jude is on her playlist, and I love it. But my very favourite Beatles song is *Blackbird*.

I'm in a town children's chorus. The minister who runs it plays piano. We all meet one evening a week in a church right beside my house, so I just walk there. The boys are practicing harmonies right now for our Christmas concert. We get to wear knee-length black tunics. I'm a soprano, and I solo at most performances. This year I'll be singing *Walking in the Air*. Reverend Shirley suggested to Mum that I audition for The Highland Boys' Choir, but that's over an hour away twice a week, and Mum always has to be on call for work. I'm already pretty tall for Grade 6, so I won't be singing high notes forever. Our little chorus is good enough, and everybody seems to appreciate my new green earring. It's for the environment.

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

I have friends who've been in my class since JK. When my three-legged cat, Chummy, suddenly died last May, a bunch of kids came over to help me hold a funeral. I also bury all the killed birds that hit our windows. It really breaks my heart. I dig little holes, and I sing something. I do all that alone.

I miss Chummy so much! We adopted her as an adult from a feral cat sanctuary. After her burial in her favourite woods, we built a bonfire and roasted marshmallows. There were northern lights. Kind of *purr*-fect.

I've been noticing that a classmate has started helping Miss Fields, our new teacher. Isla's bestie just moved away, so maybe she's feeling down. I'm really interested in helping too, so I think I'll talk to both of them tomorrow to find out how. It would be cool to actually give a Friday spelling dictation. There are grownup challenge words like *deoxyribonucleic acid or onomatopoeia* that we can learn for fun. It's awesome just saying them out loud.

I want to be a teacher just like ours. On Day 1, she wrote *Respecting yourself brings respect* in rainbow letters on the whiteboard. She loves questions, so when somebody asked her about it, she said that rainbows were scientific phenomena. Phenomena was in our very first dictation. She said that light is actually made up of rainbow colours, and all their connections symbolize, not only this class, but this school, this town, and Canada itself. Plus, she said, we're all phenomenal.

Together, those seven colours, or ROY G. BIV, make a spectrum. Humans are spectrums too, with all their different identities and learning styles. We're unique, yet the same. We soon figure out that when we judge, label, or laugh at others, we're limiting ourselves. Connecting every colour creates light, and light can be both science and awareness.

I feel this. And I want to learn more

CountyLife

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Haliburton Timber Mart *

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Minden Valumart *

Rexall *

Shoppers Drug Mart Haliburton *

Todd's Independent *

All inserts are to selected distribution areas.

For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

Beautiful Fisher by Tammy Nash

Chest waders revisited

IN A couple of hundred years, when historians are relegated to reviewing Instagram footage from these troubled times, they will probably conclude that we were not nearly as smart as we think we are.

If we were, we would have made insulated chest waders a normal part of our winter attire long ago.

Yet, for some strange reason, we did not.

Oh sure, every now and then some forward-thinking, brilliant, visionary puts on a pair of his favourite trout fishing chest waders and gets ready to step outside and face whatever winter can throw at me.

STEVE GALEA

Beyond 35

But this act of genius is usually met with derisive laughter from his better half, followed by a stern prohibition that forbids him from leaving the house dressed up like an "idiot."

Then, he is told, in no uncertain terms, to take the waders off, and instead put on a pair of winter boots appropriate for the conditions and lunch in a fancy restaurant.

Aye, but here's the rub.

What your spouse deems, "appropriate," are boots whose tops are higher than the snow that she expects you to walk through.

This is where it starts to go wrong.

I mean who can predict for certain the depth of snow an idiot is going to walk through on any given day?

Oh sure, in a perfect world you should be able to do this.

You'd just assume they walk in places where the snow has been ploughed, shoveled, blown, or packed down. But here's something you might not have considered when you made that assumption. In a perfect world, who would pull a $20 bill out of their wallet on a blustery day and, in a moment of inattention, let it get blown out of their frozen fingers by a malicious north wind?

You guessed it. Only an idiot would do that.

Nor could anyone have predicted that the 20 bucks will more than likely land just out of reach in an adjacent snow-covered field, where it then lingers seductively, calling its owner's name like mermaids singing to a lonely sailor. Or that it would also wave precariously in the breeze, enticing that person to just take a couple of steps towards it to reunite.

Since that person is also an outdoorsy type, you could have in no way predicted that he would do a quick calculation. But knowing him, you could have probably predicted that he gets his calculations wrong every time.

So, when he confirms the tops of his winter boots are 10 inches high, and then uses his vast outdoors expertise to estimate that the snow that the wayward bill is waving to him from is probably nine inches deep at most, what could go wrong?

Well, as you soon witness, he takes one small step towards the money and quickly finds himself belly-deep in snow. But don't worry, most of it went down his "appropriate" winter boots. The good news is he starts to smirk because he understands he would have been better off wearing waders.

While he was gloating, however, the $20 bill gets blown just out of reach again. So, he takes another step towards it, which prompts several passersby to start asking aloud, "I wonder who lost that toque? And why is there muffled cursing beneath it?"

The good news is when he finally gets back, he once again considers his theories about waders in winter. And concedes he was in over his head.

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Take a moment to hear Nature's Song

GREG J. ROE
Music Notes

ON ONE of those sunny February days we have had recently, I took the opportunity to get out a lawn chair and sit against the south wall of the house. Almost immediately, I felt that spring was in the air.

My first realization was the 'music' around me. A plethora of birds - chickadees, nuthatches, bluejays, grosbeaks and more. Their singing seemed to have a particularly joyful lilt to it. Even the turkeys offered a guttural gobble for the bass line. I felt good.

Of course, if you're a classical music fan, the first thing that may jump to mind musically is Vivaldi's *Spring*, from *The Four Seasons*. Even if you're not a classical fan you would likely know the melody.

When Ian Tyson described the wind in the pines as "Nature's violins," I believe he tapped into a music history that that transcends time (not to mention creating a dynamite image). Tyson was observing that music is everywhere; you just have to listen. This is never more true, than in spring.

The robin's song is legendary and the spring warblers add a fabulous backup vocal. It is the kind of music that makes you stop, when on a walk, to look and listen. If you need a rhythm section, a flushed partridge will do the job, or if you have been lucky enough to walk along the ocean's shore, you know that the pounding surf is the perfect timpani section to the song of the seabirds.

We are fortunate to live in Haliburton County, where Nature's Song is everywhere. The loon at the lakeside has a quality that is both mystical and truly Canadian and the cacophony of the spring peepers is a short lived, landmark of a sound.

For me, there is no more soothing memory than sleeping, as a boy, in the second storey of a boathouse on Canning Lake. The lapping of the lake in the slip below and the eerie call of the whip-poor-will are forever etched in my mind.

Unfortunately, it's been several years since I last heard a whip-poor-will's call. Perhaps this spring will change that.

In the book, *This is Your Brain on Music*, there is a line that states,

"Music is unusual among human activities for both its ubiquity and its antiquity.'' It is everywhere. In my past life as a high school English teacher, I would sometimes enter a Grade 9 English class and ask the students to clear their desks of everything except a pen and some paper. I would then ask them to imagine a world where there was no music, no bird songs, wind in the trees or music streaming. I'd then ask them to simply write about this for 15 minutes. The writing and discussion that ensued was always fascinating. As well, the task was always difficult, as many students found it almost impossible to imagine such a world - and rightly so!

In the opening paragraphs I mentioned "Nature's violins" which comes from a song, The Old Double Diamond, sung by Ian Tyson and written by Gary McMahan. Many composers have turned to nature for musical inspiration. Think *Springtime in the Rockies*, and *Summer Rain* to name just two ... I am sure more are coming to your mind as you read.

There is truly something in spring that is musical, mystical and regenerating. What else would drive one to write a column like this!? And it's only two weeks away!

So, the next time those storm clouds gather, turn off the radio, TV and all other 'devices,' settle into a comfortable chair, and "listen to the rhythm of falling rain."

Mourning Dove by Jill Moulton

Woodpecker by Jill Moulton

Haliburton HIGHLANDS Seniors Active Living Centre

Check out this month's SALC events and activities for residents aged 55+

Board game drop-in – various dates in March
Qi Gong for Seniors – March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Seniors Stretch Class – March 3, 10, 17, 24
Exercise Classes with Georgia – March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Snowshoeing – March 4
Genealogy for Seniors – March 5, 13, 18, 25
Functional Senior Fitness – March 5, 19
Painting Class – March 5, 19
Needle Felting: Spring Nests – March 5, 6, 11, 12, 27
Seniors Balance and Cardio Fitness Classes – March 6, 13, 20, 27
Mental Health 101 webinar – March 10
Nature Connection – March 11
Balance & Strength Class – March 11, 25
Seniors Exercise Program – March 11, 25
Yarners Social – March 4, 11, 18, 25
Chair Yoga – March 12, 26
Seniors Active Living Fair – March 13
Coffee House – March 14
Senior Wellness Info Session – March 17
Crafternoon Drop-In – March 18
Animal Skull Identification webinar – March 23
Be Ready – 72-Hour Preparedness workshop – March 23
Savouring Stories – March 26
Information Tax Benefits and Credits for Adults 65+ webinar - March 26
Coffee House – March 28
Stress Management webinar – March 31

For full details, visit HaliburtonCounty.ca/SALC or pick up a calendar at a municipal office, library or Legion near you!

Haliburton County Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC)

Through this program, older adults (55+) and seniors (65+) are invited to get active, make friends, and be well!

The SALC Program is designed to provide social, cultural, learning, and recreational opportunities for seniors to stay fit, healthy and socially connected in their communities.

SALC Programming is available in Haliburton County beginning in July 2025, through collaboration between the County of Haliburton and local municipalities, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, and multiple partners.

Funding for this program has been provided by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

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Cowgirl riding a rooster, don't tcha know

MAYBELLE'S
Fireside Stories

DEAR READER,

Sometimes, it doesn't take much to put a big ol' smile on ol' Maybelle's ol' face. Like a T-shirt I saw with the image of a cowgirl riding a rooster the size of a horse, don'tcha know. Her cowgirl hat framing her head full of curls, a big smile on her pretty face … her cowgirl boots hugging the side of the rooster's feathers.

Why, I just HAD to have that T-shirt, don'tcha know. Of course, I did. Why? Because it makes me smile every time I see it.

Small bits of joyful pleasures, important at any time, but I find that during this lonnnnngggg winter that seems to be flapping on the lips of everybody in Lake WhaddayathinkImean, they're more important than ever.

So, I thought I'd ask my good friends, Vilma Yuccch, Sybil Beaucannon Hughes, Twindle Mumbly, Beanpole Starkman and Officer Stanley Penelope McBottom what little bits of pleasure have been bringing smiles to their faces during this seemingly endless winter.

You see, none of us are avid skiers or snowshoers who have been having the time of their lives with all of the snow that's been blanketing Lake WhaddayathinkImean for weeks on end. So, it's been more about what happens inside the warmth and non-slippery surfaces of the place you hang your bonnet, where joy must spring from, don'tcha know.

Now, Twindle has been busy with his taxidermy, and more playful with it than ever. Why if he didn't put a frilly baby bonnet on a fox and fuzzy slippers on a moose, don'tcha know. PINK fuzzy slippers, to boot.

Sybil went ahead and put big lavender streaks in her short white hair and looked twenty minutes younger. But, seriously, she looks fantastic, and ol' Maybelle doesn't usually use that word to describe anything other than extremely delicious homemade chocolate. Which brings me to Vilma Yuccch's little bits of joyful pleasure.

Vilma has been making all of us happy with melt-in-your-mouth homemade chocolate bits, made with tons of butter, peanut butter, chopped nuts, and even a bit of raspberry jam. Oh boy. Big, fattening smiles on all of our pale wintry faces.

Beanpole has taken to carving. Yep, carving all kinds of wonderful pieces from old tree limbs and such. One was so striking that he won first place in our annual artists' show at the WhaddayathinkImean Gallery, don'tcha know. It was a hawk. A big, beautiful hawk perched on a branch, staring straight at you like he knows your secrets. He carved a pair of bifocals for it, but, at the last minute, decided that the hawk could see well enough without them.

As for Vilma's sweetheart of seventeen years, Officer Stanley Penelope McBottom – it seems that his bits of joyful pleasure these days is simply spending time with Vilma. Why, if he doesn't still gush every time he falls into her big baby blues. But, okay, aside from that – as you know he loves inventing things, like Bogart's thought-voice synthesizer cap that enables us to hear what Bogart, my pet bear, is thinking. Well, now he's gotten into making 3D printed toys and fidgets, and is having the time of his life doing so.

My favourite McBottom creation is a beautiful little 3D rose with little legs, feet and hands. And then there are the sponge and toilet paper holders that also have feet and hands that, well, just make me smile, don'tcha know.

Bogart is finding great joy listening to old George Carlin standup routines, memorizing them, and performing them for all of us. Why that bear never ceases to amaze me.

And, as for ol' Maybelle, why my joyful pleasure continues to be writing to you, Dear Reader, and sharing the day-to-days in Lake W and bits and pieces of time spent and shared with my good friends, don'tcha know. I will add that when the sun comes out, I love bundling up and walking in the forest. The sun sparkles on snow covered branches and billowy mounds where water from the creek gurgles beneath with a promise of Spring being just around the corner.

Unfortunately, it's still a very BIG corner. But, nevermind. It's all good. And, I'm grateful for it, don'tcha know.

Maybelle's Fireside Stories is written by Jerelyn Craden. "Maybelle's Cure for What Ails You," 21 of Maybelle's best short stories and her novel: "Vessie Flamingo Outshining the Moon" are now available at www.amazon.com.

Keep your kin close

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

I WAS having a conversation with a neighbour this week and he offered that I was a 'kin keeper'. He explained that it was an Irish term that was about a person that kept their family connected and kept their family traditions alive.

I loved the idea of giving what I feel like I do a name. When I looked it up, lots of references likened the kin keeper to the family glue, the tradition keeper, the person that writes letters, sends messages, and tells family stories. It reminded me of a joke I saw on the internet that read: I may not be the family glue, but I am the only one who knows where the glue is.

Take a minute to think about who this is in your family. Who is the one that tells the old stories of grandparents or childhood, who sends the cards and keeps people connected. Who makes the traditional recipes and encourages the get togethers? And if you don't have much family, who in your circle of friends is the glue?

Once you have the person in mind, take a moment to appreciate all they do and turn it around to make sure that you are telling them a story of how much impact they have and how much they are appreciated. I think everyone has some role in keeping their kin, in a big and small way, we are all connected, we are all taking care, taking responsibility and celebrating each other's wins and what we enjoy about one another.

Sometimes we do not know how to help another person through a challenge, but we all know how to make a sandwich and make some time, keep your kin close and connected.

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Stories

FOR THE past few weeks, I've had the pleasure of writing stories about our own stories.

Three of our contributing writers have recently published their own books.

Fay Martin has a regular, bi-weekly column in the *Haliburton Echo* and the *Minden Times*, and will be officially launching her book, *Dementia Widow: a memoir about love, death and survival* in early March.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

Gail Stelter has a column called *Writing on the Senior Side*, which has run for many years in our *County Life* pages. Her book, *21 Smithfield Drive - Family Stories*, will be available this spring.

And Rick Whitteker, author of *Naturally Yours*, a regular column in *County Life*, and regular contributor to the *Echo* and the *Times*, has taken an accumulation of his submitted columns and sorted them into a book, titled *Nature Nuggets: Hiking, Paddling and the Ecology of the Haliburton Highlands*, and is available for pre-order now.

I am incredibly proud that these writers have used our newspapers as a means of getting their work into the world.

Now I don't believe any of them consciously used our papers as a jumping point for an authorship career. They are just three people with a natural talent for writing and stories, and utilized any means necessary to explore the Wild West of Words.

When I tell people that I have a career in journalism, more than once, I've been asked what type of journalism. Online? Social media? Blogs?

Newspapers, I respond. Real, ink and paper pages.

"I thought those went extinct?" they often quip.

Never, I say.

And maybe that's wishful thinking. A pie in the sky dream, as I hold onto a semblance of days gone by through the art of storytelling, news sharing, pen and paper.

But I think that now, more than ever, we need these tangible, tactile offerings. It's a world of Artificial Intelligence, of headlines that stream across our screens, of online portals claiming to be real news, but voices and stories getting mashed and mangled in the process.

But there is nothing more real than a newspaper.

Beyond the opportunity to share stories from folks dedicated to bringing their communities to life, the physical experience of sitting and reading words speaks to a time where we were encouraged to sit still. To take a beat. To push pause.

And I don't think it's our fault that so many of us have been swept into the whirlwind of life; the colours and clashing of a societal machine whose hunger is never quelled.

But in these times of ever-flowing expectations and peace-defying demands, perhaps the bravest thing we can do is to stand still. To take a beat. To regain our focus and prioritize next steps in a timely and meticulous manner.

And through it all, we have our stories. The ones that offer pearls of the past, fragments of the future. Margaret Atwood is attributed to once saying a line that has forever resonated with me, and catapulted me into this career: «In the end, we'll all become stories."

That's it. Our bones and bodies and dreams and aspirations will be whittled down to nothing but words.

So kudos to our writers, who have taken a next step in sharing their stories in a world that needs more books, a society that needs more pauses. We are honoured that you shared your words with us, and are excited to watch you fly.

And to those who believe that newspapers are going extinct, that there is not a role for community stories in an ever-changing world, that we should keep the pace with a society that demands we overrun our dreams, to that I say quite simply: never.

Top 10 Reasons why I won't miss the Winter Olympics

I ENJOYED the Winter Olympics as much as the next person. Like most Canadians, I am also proud of, and grateful to, our athletes for all their dedication, effort, and sacrifice. Having said that, I was sort of relieved to see the Games end.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

Here are my top 10 reasons:

1. Can finally stop asking "What's this event called?"
2. Looking forward to, once again, watching sports that require people to wave coloured ribbons.
3. Until snow shovelling is a winter event, I can't take the Games seriously.
4. They turned down my suggestion for a biathlon with rocket launchers.
5. Still no event that includes fencing with icicles.
6. I'd rather yell at referees I know.
7. It was too difficult watching the American hockey team pretend they knew or cared who Kash Patel was.
8. Athletes in skin tight outfits always make me think twice about that second piece of pie.
9. The slalom events keep reminding me of the last time I tried to walk down the hill in my yard.
10. Just realized no matter how long I wait, I will never see the figure skaters clearing the bench for a brawl.

Inhale

Wind sweeping across the frozen Lake, seizing my Breath, sculpting Snow,
no path to follow, so I follow my own, my shoulders hunching against the cold that stings my cheeks,
burns my bones,
my boots crunching across the roof of Snow, concealing a ceiling of ice that seals the Lake in blackness
'till spring,
the fish still swimming through the darkness that shrouds their days, breathing through their gills
in water that I wonder whether is as cold as Air up here, Wind rattling my Breath as I inhale,
cupping my face up towards the blaze of blue Sky, blinking up at the orb of Sun and its halo of white light,
blinding me for a moment as I peer back down at my boots clomping across the frozen tundra of Lake,
marveling at the patterns in the Snow, formed by a roaming, sleepless Wind that blows all day and night,
leaving whorls in the Snow that resemble the ones imprinted on the pads of my fingers, or on the twisting
trunks of some trees,
or water that curls around rocks before it's free to float downstream,
divots dimpling Snow, dunes and craters sculpted by Wind, my eyes transfixed by this barren
terrain of Snow
that my boots crunch across, approaching the middle of the frozen Lake,
my lungs inhaling all this open space,
Sky and Snow and Wind, widening the space inside me for my Breath to breathe,
feeling free as the gust of Wind that whirls past me, across the moonscape of Snow,
I wonder how much longer my legs and Breath will carry me, it's too far to the other shore,
where bare trees, tiny as matchsticks, stand among the pines, I feel tinier than them, this speck of flesh
being hurled by Wind across the frozen Lake beneath a sprawling Sky that cradles both the orb of Sun
and half-Moon,
I blink up at the white light of Sun and smudge of afternoon Moon, sharing space in the same Sky,
my shadow my only companion today as I turn around to crunch back towards the shore,
admiring the whorls and dents and dunes left in the Snow by an invisible Wind, leaving its mark behind,
as it blows across the frozen tundra of Lake, sealed in its tomb of ice, fish swishing through the blackness
that blankets their days,
their Breath breathing through the cold, that they don't even feel, Life still slinking
through the soundless depths
beneath the frozen surface, as I pause for a moment in a crater of Snow, canopied by blue Sky above, held by
the frozen Lake below,
inhaling the silence and light of the space that surrounds me, just feeling my Breath breathe.

Sylvie Kalenda

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lynda@lyndalitwin.ca

1211 GELERT ROAD $1,200,000

- 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom, 2019 Royal Home. Large deck surrounding home
- 49.9 Acres with trails
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- More outbuildings and storage on the property, Heated greenhouse
- Minutes from Minden and Kinmount

Kelly Mercer
Broker
705-455-7500
kelly@kelly-mercer.ca

3777 GLAMORGAN ROAD $834,000

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Lisa Mercer
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705-457-0364
www.lisamercer.ca
lisa@lisamercer.ca

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Jacquie Barry
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www. kenbarry.com
Out Standing In Our Field

1044 SHANAHAN TRAIL $515,000

Step inside this adorable fully updated 2 bedroom cottage, just a stones throw from the public beach on Horseshoe Lake. This 1 acre property is made for entertaining, featuring three bunkies, a sauna, hot tub, and a fire pit, plus a large deck perfect for summertime barbecues. Check it out!

Terry Carr & Drew Staniforth
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March 26 - 29

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If you are thinking of selling your property this is a great opportunity to promote it. Contact a local RE/MAX agent for more details.

Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Bald Eagle by Tammy Nash

Swans in Fort Irwin by Randy Barber

Barred Owl by Rhonda LaMantia

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- Presentations
- Demonstrations
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FREE EVENT!

REGISTER NOW!

Date: **Friday, March 13, 2026**

Location: **Haliburton Legion Branch 129 719 Mountain Street**

Time: **9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**
Registration opens at 8:30am

HaliburtonCounty.ca/SALC
705-286-1333 x 243
SALC@haliburtoncounty.ca

This event is hosted by the County of Haliburton in partnership with Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario OACAO with funding provided by the Government of Ontario.

OACAO Est. 1973 50 years of service

Funding provided by: Ontario

Blue Jay by Jill Moulton

Sharing stories with Gail Stelter

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

Author Gail Stelter took the time to sit down with the local newspaper, and share her stories that went into her newly published book, *21 Smithfield Drive*. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

They say that stories are the strings that hold generations together; bits and pieces of the past, shared through the lens of someone who lived those chapters.

And if they aren't shared in some way, shape, or form, those stories are lost forever.

That was a thought that haunted Gail Stelter. She had lived a full life in her seven plus decades. She had found her soulmate, raised a happy family, wore many hats as an educator, and volunteered all over the County.

But there was something missing. "I've always been a writer," said Stelter, as we sat down for a coffee on the first spring-like day of the year. "I knew I'd always write a book."

At the age of 73, Stelter set out to do just that. And not just any book; a story of her life. "I wrote this book, my family stories, my memoir, for my children, my grandchildren, and my still-to-come great-grandchildren," opens Stelter in her preface. "They will experience, through my lens, the happenings of the war years and the 1950s and 1960s; stories that by that time will have taken place a hundred or so years ago."

Many would recognize Stelter's name from our own pages. She has written a number of columns over the years, including the current *Senior Side*, which runs bi-weekly in our *County Life* papers.

"I wrote my first book when I was 11 years old," recalled Stelter, reminiscing on her passion for words. She noted that while she didn't finish the book her young heart had set out to do, she knew that she had found her passion.

As an adult, Stelter completed a certificate in writing from the University of Toronto. From the classes, she received direction and mentorship from David Layton. This was when the wheels started to turn for a collection of stories that captured a life from days gone by. "My goal when I started the program was to write my stories," she said. "And I was determined to get that done before I turned 77."

The stories started to flow out of her. Her book, *21 Smithfield Drive*, an homage to her childhood home, is a collection of 60 short stories, split up into three sections: Before There Was Me, a Baby Boomer Childhood, and Young and In Love, 1967 and 1968. Covering the first 19 years of Stelter's life, and unravelling an era of wartime stories and post-war convention, transporting the reader back to a time not often shared.

"But I never wrote this book to become a famous author," said Stelter. "My audience will always be my family."

With four children and nine grandchildren, Stelter's world revolves around her family. And with that priority in mind, she firmly believes in sharing the memories she has with the next generations. "It becomes a social history," she said. "And people enjoy reading these social histories through the lens of those who lived it."

When it comes to words of the wise for budding writers, Stelter offers some tried and tested advice: "Take a course," she said, noting that it doesn't need to be a post-grad course or anything formal, "just something you get you thinking about writing. Something to kickstart those ideas."

Stelter also noted the importance of reading. "You can't be a writer if you are not a reader," she said. "Keep reading."

And most importantly: "Decide on who you want your audience to be." Stelter noted that with her audience always being her own family, it has shaped and rounded her stories, in an effort to showcase the bits and pieces that really carved out her life.

On Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m., Stelter will be hosting a book launch at the Haliburton United Church. "It will not be what is usually expected at such an event," she said. "I am planning a Story-Sharing Afternoon, and I am inviting the residents of Haliburton County. History is people, and our shared everyday life stories are personal and important. At my story-sharing afternoon, I will read a story or two from my book and hopefully inspire others to share their stories."

Because stories are what ties us together; bits and pieces of the past, shared through the lens of someone who lived those chapters. We have to share these stories, otherwise, they will float away with the wind. "Everyone has stories," said Stelter. "Was there ever a story that was so unique that you'll never forget it?"

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m., Card night 7 p.m.
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5 p.m.
Special events:
2nd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary - 11 a.m.
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
Last Sunday of the month - All you can eat breakfast
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices.
Email: 441RCL@gmail.com Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Special Events Only, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 7 p.m.
Sundays: March 8 L.A Breakfast $10. 9 to 11 a.m.
29 Cribbage Tournament. Registration is at 10 a.m.
Mondays: March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Tuesdays: March 3, 10, 17, 2, 31 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: March 4, 11, 18, 25
Darts $5/player 2 p.m.
Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m. – No need to pre-register
Thursdays: March 12, 26 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
Friday: March 6, 20 Fish and Chips 1pc/$15, 2pc/$20. 5 to 8 p.m. Karaoke 6:30 to 10:30 p.m.
March 13, 27 Wings and Jam Session $15/lb. 5 to 8 p.m.
Community Care 55+ Lunch $20. 12 p.m.
Saturdays: March 7, 14, 21, 28 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
March 14 St. Paddy's at The Beach Dance 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
March 28 Nacho Average Trivia Registration is at 6:30 p.m. Game Begins at 7 p.m. Sharp. $5/Player
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-222

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Wanted: scrap cars and trucks. Cash paid. Please call **705-286-3758** or **cell 249-332-1212**

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Fitness Room for rent: Blue Sky Yoga Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright & Open in Downtown Haliburton with Private entrance and washroom. **Health Professional/Therapist treatment room for rent** at Haliburton Chiropractic. Furnished with massage table, desk & chair. Available by the hour, half or full day. Contact: 705-457-3500. info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

FOR RENT

Newly renovated 2-unit house on 9.5 scenic acres near Haliburton. LOWER: 1-bed, 1-bath. Features open-concept living, new appliances, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces. 10 minutes from Haliburton & perfect for peaceful living. Contact: info@aboveboardcarpentry.com **705-455-2196**

Spacious one bedroom, one bath lower apartment located in the heart of Minden. The apartment provides a perfect blend of town and country living. Features include front door access, open concept living, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces, internet and preferential parking spots. $1,875 All inclusive plus shared hydro. Please Contact: **647-394-4899.** Photos available upon request.

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2 bedroom/1 bedroom + sitting room, upper floor apartment, non-smoker. Located in rural area between Haliburton and Minden. Fridge and stove, partially furnished. Rent is $750, including utilities, with 1st and last month's rent required. Applicants must have a full time job or pension and provide references. Please contact: jimdeitz50@gmail.com

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BonnieView Inn / 10 - 12 April 2026 A weekend of friendship and reminiscing Contact: **BruceMedcalf@yahoo.ca** for details

FREE

Electric piano available for free. This piano has 88 weighted keys and can be played through its own built in speakers or you can plug-in headphones to listen and not be heard. The piano is an excellent shape with one exception. There's one key that is dead. If interested, send an email to steve@swglover.com

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Savouring Stories
When: Thursday, Feb. 26 from 11 a.m. to noon
Where: Highland Grove Library
Each month, we explore the fascinating world of food through stories, history, shared experiences, and cooking (every second month). No registration required.

P.A. Day Family Movie - Coco
When: Friday, Feb. 27 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Minden Hills and Dysart (Haliburton Village) Library
This heartwarming adventure follows Miguel, a young boy who dreams of becoming a musician, and finds himself on a journey through the Land of the Dead. All ages welcome. No registration required. Movie is rated PG.

How to Create a Micromeadow
When: March 3, 1 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Centre, 55 Parkside St.
Do you love to garden? Please join the Minden & District Horticultural Society to learn "How to Create a Micromeadow" from guest speaker Baz Conlinfollowed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome!

World Day of Prayer
When: Friday March 6 at 1:30 p.m.
Where: Our Lady of Fatima Church,
7 Bobcaygeon Rd. Minden
Come for an ecumenical service featuring NIGERIA! Refreshments and fellowship to follow. Please join us. All are invited. COME!!!

Youth Unlimited Pancake Dinner
When: March 7 Two Sittings: 4:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.
Where: Lakeside Church
Donations at the door support free after school programming for local youth in grades 4-12.

A Journey through Addiction
When: Monday, March 9, from 7 to 9 p.m.
Where: Schofield Room, Haliburton Legion,
719 Mountain St, Haliburton
You are invited to a discussion with Rich Anton, who will share a look at his life through addiction and recovery, as well as the initiative "Coming Full Circle" for those with mental health and addiction challenges, where he serves as a peer support specialist. The evening will begin with live music by Peter Smith. This event, hosted by the Baha'i community of Haliburton, with the goal of "Making Our Communities Better Places" is open to all, with no admission charge and light refreshments provided.

Recurring events

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly
When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of $59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Bridge for Seniors
When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Duplicate Bridge - Please arrange for a partner.
When: Wednesdays at 12:45 at Park Lane Apartments.
Fridays at 12:45 at Haliburton Legion, Schofield Room.

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street

Monthly Community Breakfast
When: Fourth Saturday of Every Month from 9-11am
Where: Fellowship Room, Haliburton United Church, 10 George St. Haliburton
Hosted by North Entrance Masonic Lodge and Haliburton United Church. This welcoming event is intended to bring together members of the community for good food and fellowship. There is no fixed cost for attending the breakfast. Donations are warmly welcomed and will be put to meaningful use supporting local initiatives. A portion of the proceeds collected from the breakfast will be donated to the Public School Breakfast Program in Haliburton County, helping to ensure that local students start their day with a nutritious meal.

Lakeside Church Service
When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome here.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 and 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw at the Coboconk Legion. Five spins for $10. The first four rounds are for highest and lowest score with two winners per round. The last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

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Snowdon issues ultimatum

Threatens to call in the restructuring commissioner

by Andrew Milne

Snowdon will not call in a provincial Municipal Affairs commissioner to make restructuring decisions for the local governments.

Yet.

Snowdon councillors voted at a meeting last week to delay the decision to call in the commissioner for six weeks, to give the county a chance to demonstrate that it is serious about restructuring.

County councillors from across the county — including Dysart reeve/county warden Murray Fearrey and Anson, Hindon and Minden reeve Jeanne Anthon — were present for what was formally a local Snowdon municipal meeting, and participated in the discussion.

The provincial commissioner, once called in, would have the power unilaterally to impose restructuring measures — up to and including the amalgamation of local governments.

As reeve George Simmons and deputy-reeve Ross Rigney explained it, the motion was an expression of Snowdon's frustration with a perceived lack of commitment on the part of the county body to get on with realistic restructuring efforts.

Said Rigney, "I must say that there's a lot of disbelief in me about whether or not there's the heart and the political will on the will council to do it. I know that on an individual basis people have a lot of opinions. I must say that I think you've had two good years of a lot of debate, going back to Bark Lake. And there was always that sense that we were going to come out of that debate and were going to move ahead. But where are we today?"

Discussions on local government restructuring were largely driven from the outset by serious cuts and changes to the way the province provides transfer grants to local governments. Though the process started with players considering as options amalgamating some local governments, eliminating the lower tier governments in favour of one county government, or, conversely, eliminating the county government level, the discussion mostly seemed to eliminate, over time those options, in favour of attempting to find efficiencies within the existing legal structures. In an odd deal brokered by Fearrey at the county level but paid for by separate municipal governments, consultant David Barber was brought in to help find those efficiencies.

(more on page 3)

Snug as a bug in a quincy

Mike Smith, Cheryl Smith, Daniel Walker, Chantel Smith and Donelda Smith spent a night last week in a quincy — an igloo-like structure constructed of piled snow — they built in their backyard. Donelda has built the structures as part of a program at Kinark, where she works. They report that, heated with a candle, the quincy was entirely comfortable — even cosy.

School board waiting nervously for April

by Andrew Milne

A mere month before nominations for trustee positions would normally open, Haliburton County's Board of Education is drifting in an uneasy limbo.

Effectively stripped of much of its power, along with all other boards in the province pending the upcoming amalgamation proposed in provincial legislation, the board, it would seem, can do very little but wait for the word from the province on many significant decisions.

Director Brad Saunders said at the board's regular meeting last week, "That's the irony of this whole piece. Someone asked at a meeting just last week — aren't there a lot of things being decided?

"Absolutely not. There is nothing being decided, because there is no basis for making decisions. I can't recall for an awfully long time in our business when we've had a period of quiet such as this. Because you simply don't have the capacity to make decisions. I look around this table, and what are you? You're basically a decision making body. What can you do when your ability to make a decision has been put on hold."

Board officials including Saunders himself have been trying to get some idea of what's happening and when, from officials at the Ministry of Education, but, says Saunders, the answers have not been forthcoming.

"It seems very, very clear that the politicians have asked their staffs to keep their lips very tightly sealed about whatever is going to happen after April 1."

The lengthy piece of legislation at the centre of all of this — the province's Bill 104 — the Fewer School Boards Act — will be in committee hearings up until the third week of this month. On the fourth week, it will go back to the house to become law.

Until that happens, however, the government doesn't seem to be prepared to answer the specific questions on implementation boards might have. The answer to most questions on local decisions — can a board proceed with building a school? what happens to boards' reserves and debts? even what will be the impact on taxes? — is that a local committee will decide. For the bigger questions, even within what latitude those local committees will operate — the answer is that those committee's boss — the provincial level education restructuring committee, will be carrying the ball.

The local committees — there will, current plans are, be one per amalgamated board — haven't been appointed yet. The provincial committee is taking shape, but hasn't hired a CEO yet. And none of this is official until the bill is enacted — potentially as early as the end of this month, in time for the nomination process.

That has affected every aspect of what the board does — including, not too surprisingly, work proceeding towards smoothing the amalgamation itself.

Says chair Cheryl Murdoch, who met with Victoria's chair two weeks

(more on page 3)

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